


Kula Manu 1998





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Division of English & Communication Studies
Brigham Young University – Hawaii



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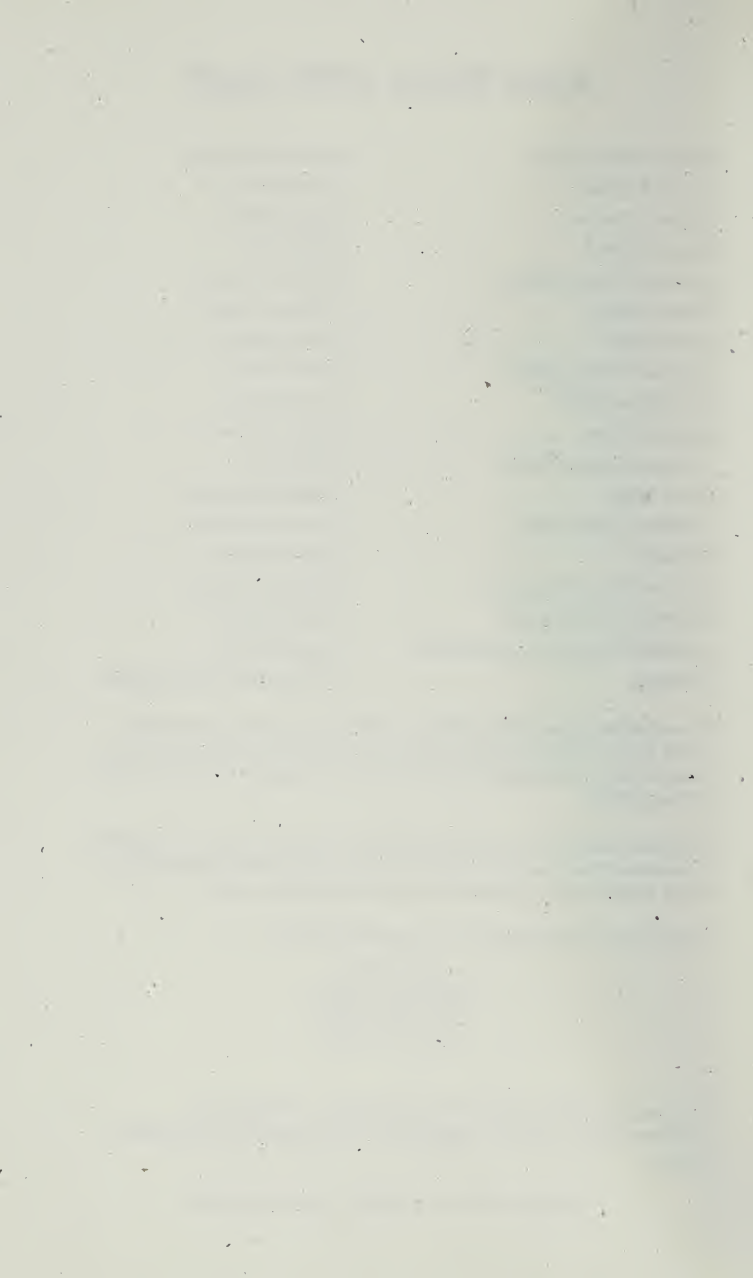
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Table of Contents

Art / Photography:

Anderson, Ramon	A Particular Woman	
Bang, Kara	Beauty	45
Bang, Kara	Bench	1
Chen, Todd	Harbour View	26
Free, Amy	Ta'ahine	9
Hilton, Becky	Untitled	27
Hilton, Becky	Untitled	56
Lee, Jenica	Leeiki	19
Sarafian, Michael	Sacred Falls	31
Sarafian, Michael	Beautiful Hawaii	63
Starr, Bryn	Old Stuff	30
Steoger, Sally	Untouched	7
Strawn, Crystal	Whirlpool	53
Teh, Susan	Glory at Turtle Bay (<i>Cover Photo</i>)	

Essay:

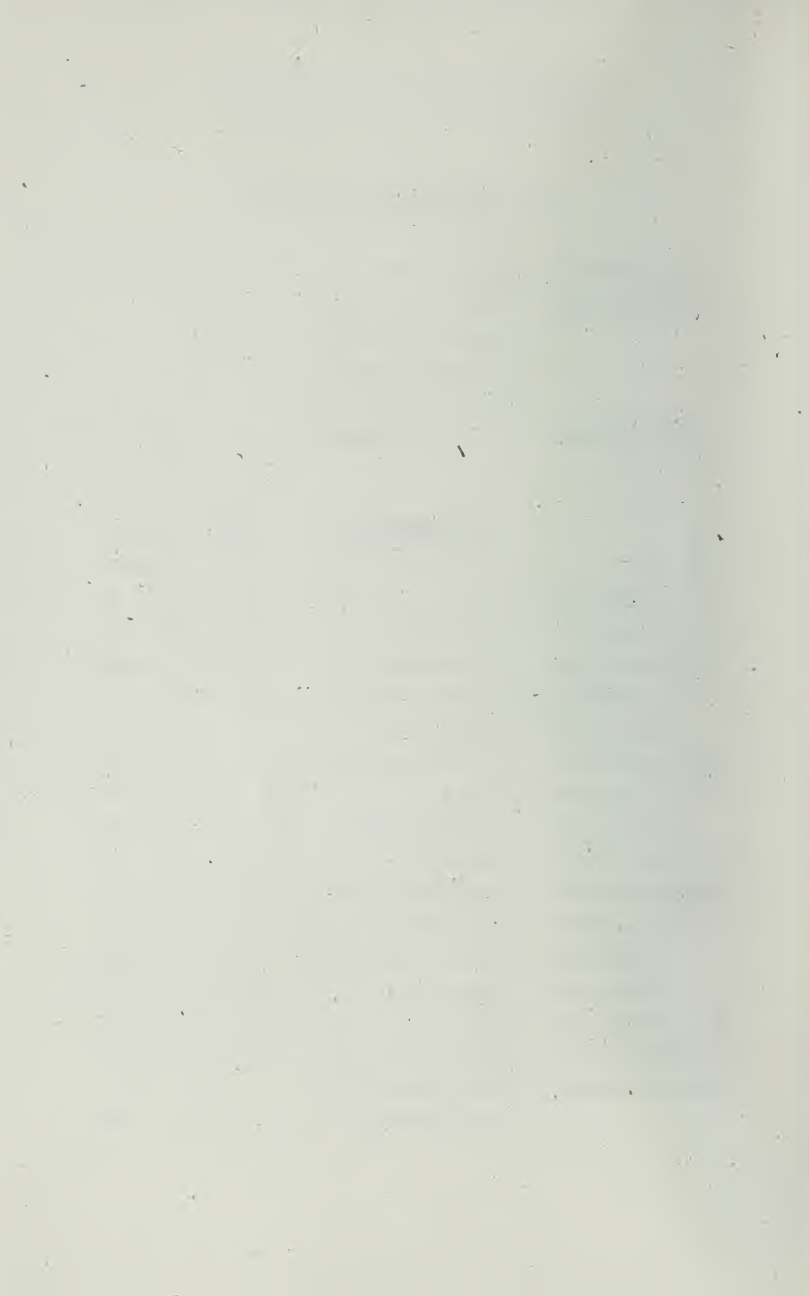
Baker, Jim	Dirty Plastic	20
Cantwell, Lee	...And Sam	10
Dillabough, Sam	What If?	48
Elmer, Nathan	Eureka	57
Neale, Naomi	A Fiery Thief	40
Ransom, Sean	Pulling Back the Black Curtain of Heaven	4

Fiction:

Chen, Wen-Chi	Island of Proco	32
Ellingson, Jake	There's a Fine Line Between Fishing and Standing on the Shore Looking Like an Idiot	14
Marler, Daniel	Across All Boundaries	64

Poetry:

Baker, Jim	Asteroids	38
Collier, Kory	Head Start	19
Collier, Kory	The Message	47
Colver, Justin	Death of Autumn	8
Gerke, Sariah	contradictions?	3
Hansen, Shannon	The Achilles Heart	39
Latu, Anya Lene	Hatred	27
Lee, Jerica B.	Courage	45
Maddock, Robert	A Limerick	30
Maddock, Robert	The Shy Arriver	18
Tomita, Bryce	Life Climb	29
Walker, Jim	Even As I Am	54
Walker, Jim	Raggedyman	2
Ward, Chris	Vines	55
Williams, Kristal	My Journal	28
Wineera, Vernice	First Sunday, Laie First Ward	46



Bench

by Kara Bang



Raggedyman

by Jim Walker

Soiled suit shredded at the knees,
Wrists dangling from the sleeves,
He prods pink plastic,
Lifts and sniffs carefully, as if a researcher
Documenting discoveries.
He thrusts one arm deep through wadded
Polyethylene, gum wrappers, cardboard, past
Diapers and kleenex, withdraws to wipe wet fingers
On a grimy pantleg, then smears again,
Questing an elusive prize—lottery ticket
Or half-eaten hot dog.
When a passing car honks, he lifts his head in wonder
And waves across a stream of rush-hour traffic
As though expecting someone.
He stares forlornly at a half-ton truck a moment,
Then seeing a policeman walk his way,
Lowers his head, grumbles to the evening air,
And shambles off towards a corner, sockless feet
Rhyming white ankles over rundown heels
As mercury vapor lamps buzz, then burst
Thin, pale light against dusk's growing chill.

contradictions?

by Sariah Gerke

The color and music
variety and spice of moments,
passion and purpose,
feelings of so many things.

The rain on my face,
a touch of your hand.

Warmth, confusion,
happiness and reality.

Symmetry and logic
with straight lines,
no fallacy or contradiction
could make

a world of black and white.

Crisp, sterile sounds,
lacking music
could be uncomplicated.

But we want the contradictions,
the complications,
irony and paradox.

We want the color,
the harmonies, and
the flavor.

We want rainbows and sunsets
painting the sky,
yellow flowers perfuming the air,
brilliantly dyed birds making music
and smiles, tears, laughter, hiccups
illustrating our book.

We want everything
that makes no sense,
because

color and music
and flavor
make being human
worthwhile.

Pulling Back the Black Curtain of Heaven

by Sean Ransom

England's Druids loved the stars. They carved massive stones from the earth and stacked them in Stonehenge, a rock observatory/temple designed to worship and study the heavens. They found magic in the sky.

So did the Greeks. They put portraits of their heroes in the stars—Perseus, Orion, Hercules. The heavens were full of stories and superhuman feats. The Romans, the Aztecs, the Egyptians, they all looked at the stars and discovered something greater than themselves. Most of them thought it was the gods.

But then the human race grew up. Astronomers from Galileo to the Hubble Space Telescope guys keep discovering that the universe is all just a cloud of dust, a few out of control gas fires and a lot of empty space. There's not much magic up there. Disappointment for the Druids.

As children, we go through these kinds of disappointments every day. Our paradoxical society prides itself on skepticism, yet encourages blind belief in the form of Santa Claus, Disneyland and "a la peanut butter sandwiches." It's indeed a bad daddy who doesn't put a dollar under the pillow when the Tooth fairy was suppose to come.

And then, we, too grow up. We learn there is something uncomfortably explainable behind the so-called magic of Santa's Elves. We learn to smirk and enter the adult world of disbelief. Magic fades into the sophisticated, urban color of cement. Our childhood quietly drains away.

Mine lasted a little longer than most, I think. At 21 I applied for work at the Magic Dragon in Irving, Texas, a magician's shop in a large suburb of Dallas. The only magic shop in the Irving phone book happened to be in need of a part-timer. I was in need of a job, so I made the five-mile drive that afternoon.

What I found there wasn't impressive. The shop anchored a run-down business plaza, sitting like a cinder

block between a cut-rate Filipino restaurant and a Veterans of Foreign Wars thrift store. A couple of scuzzy apartment complexes on the same street rented two-bedrooms to welfare recipients for \$280 a month.

For all the Magic Dragon lacked, however, it didn't lack floor space. The shop must have been 1,000 square feet, half of it packed with costumes varying from ninjas to nurses to a bootleg replica of Barney the purple dinosaur. The other half was cluttered with the kinds of cheap gags found in the back of Boy's Life magazine—whoopie cushions, itching powder, rubber vomit and other synthetic ickiness (very useful in creative hands)—a wild assortment designed to turn the Magic Dragon into heaven for a 12 year-old male. I found myself at home there.

The magic tricks—rabbit shaped sponges that multiplied in your hands, scarves that turned into silk roses, interlocking metal rings that mysteriously came apart—lined the shelves behind glass counters that ran around three sides of the room. Plastic-wrapped books on magic lined the walls in customer-proof bookshelves.

My curiosity overwhelmed the doubts created by the overall clutter and the shop's chaotic layout. So I went in. I must have given a good first impression. The owner, John hired me on the spot, making me his only employee.

Customers were few, and John spent most of his time in the storeroom/office. I labored countless hours sweeping up dust bunnies that magically appeared under shelves. (Hey, Rocky, watch me pull a rabbit from under this counter.) When John wasn't looking, I examined the magic boxes, gimmicked coin tricks, change bags and trick card decks.

It wasn't until after I knew how they worked that I realized I hadn't really ever wanted to know. My naive, believing heart somehow still wanted the magic to be real.

The disappointment felt sickeningly familiar. The same feeling left me stripped of wonder in high school astronomy class, a class I took because of my childhood fascination with the heavens. I expected my love for the stars to deepen. Instead, the class doused it.

My romance with the stars was built with my dad in the desert near Pahrump, Nevada. At night, he and I

would go into the barren desert that was our back yard. He would point out the Big Dipper, the North Star and the wide, translucent band of the Milky Way. The stars were bright as diamonds and just out of reach, like jewels in a jewelry shop case. You could almost knock them down with a dirt clod.

I learned the constellations' stories until they became comic strip heroes for me—Orion, the boastful hunter, bragging he could rid the earth of every wild beast; Sirius, his canine sidekick, faithful to a fault; the brazen Scorpius, sent by the Earth Goddess Gaea to humble the eco-terrorist hunter. Not even the gaudy colors and the outlandish plots of daytime cartoons could match the elegance and adventure of the heavens offered every night.

But high school came, and I, wanting to deepen my celestial knowledge, took the class in astronomy. We learned about star formations, astrophysics and the expansion of the universe. The teacher pulled back the black curtain of heaven and revealed the strings and wires and mechanical tick-tocks which held the stars in place. There were no heroes there. The truth of the sky pierced me with disappointment. I turned my eyes earthward. For a long time I stopped looking up at nights.

The magic shop almost turned out the same way. Finding out about stripper card decks, quarter shells and sponge ball sleights was another exercise in disappointment. Working the impossible is easier than snapping your fingers. You just fake out the audience when their eyes are on something else. It's all a big cheat.

Happily, though, I kept my eyes open this time. I put my disappointment aside and learned to do the tricks. It's been four years since I worked there, but this past Christmas I went to my bishop's house with my magic shop gimmick and made scarves disappear for his daughter and sons. I taught them how to palm a quarter for a quick vanish, and made for instant friends. The tricks were fake, they knew it, but the smiles were real. I was able to see the joy and wonder in their hearts. Christmas had a bit more magic.

At nights, I can still find the V-shaped horns of Taurus, the bull who dared kidnap the seven Pleiades sisters.

Orion stands nearby, like Errol Flynn, ready for a sword-swinging rescue.

But I also remember from high school that the Pleiades is really an immense cloud brightened with the travail of pushing out baby stars. The seven sisters become mothers of a galaxy. Reality becomes a wonder in itself.

"A little knowledge draws one away from God," said the French scientist and philosopher Pascal. "A lot of knowledge draws one closer to him." Looking at the stars reminds me of that. I still feel reality chipping at the walls of my naivete like a hammer, but now I look forward to seeing what lies behind those walls. I'm learning that beyond the disappointment of broken beliefs lies the elegant, practical beauty of lasting truth.

Untouched

by Sally Steoger



Death of Autumn

by Justin Colver

the trees wept silently
not making a sound
the leaves fell like teardrops, slowly,
not wanting to touch the ground

the sky paled
drained of its blue
the clouds fled
to find someplace new

the fields sank deep,
deep into the loam
the air was still
in death's bitter calm

the scent of death
entered and stood
the smell of dead leaves,
mildew and dried wood

chill swept over
like death before dying
someplace, somewhere,
someone was crying

Ta'ahine

by Amy Free



... and Sam

by Lee Cantwell

Lehi named his third son Sam. It sounds abrupt next to names like Laman and Lemuel. I wonder why he chose it? I can see Lehi naming a son Samuel and calling him Sam for short, but Sam is never referred to as Samuel, and nobody ever calls Lemuel, Lem. No, it was Sam all right, just Sam. Don't get me wrong; I like the name Sam. It has a good honest ring to it. The men I've known with the name Sam have been solid citizens, people you can trust. But Sam sounds different than the other names in the Book of Mormon. It sounds like a nick name; it really does.

Sam's name appears only eleven times in the Book of Mormon. Usually he's tagged on at the end of a list of his brothers: "...Laman, Lemuel, and Sam, ...and also Lemuel and Sam, ...Nephi and Sam, ...Jacob, and Joseph and Sam." It's like Sam was an afterthought mentioned, but not very important. He is often listed last, even when the brothers named before him are younger. Maybe it doesn't mean anything, but it seems peculiar.

I used to think Sam might be a little slow, a nice boy, but not as bright as the others. I decided against that idea. When Lehi sent the boys back to Jerusalem to get the Brass Plates, he sent all four of them. He wouldn't have sent Sam along on such a dangerous mission if he had been disadvantaged in any way; it doesn't make sense.

When the Lord visited Nephi and convinced him that his father was a prophet, the first thing Nephi did was to go and talk to Sam about it. He wouldn't have done that unless he had confidence in Sam's ability to understand what he was telling him. Nephi must have trusted Sam a great deal and respected him too. Sam believed everything his little brother told him and accepted it without reservation. Sam was sensitive to the spirit and humble enough to accept revelation even when it came to his younger sibling.

Later on when Nephi's plan to buy the Brass Plates from Laban backfired and nearly got them all killed, Lamen and Lemuel beat up on both Nephi and Sam. If Sam had been mentally impaired, they would probably have pushed him aside and concentrated on Nephi. Fortunately, an angel appeared and put those bullies in their place. He scolded them for abusing Nephi and told them Nephi was going to be a ruler over them. It's funny though, the angel didn't say a word about Sam, didn't mention him, didn't even seem to notice him. "Why do you smite your younger brother with a rod? Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him to be a ruler over you...?" The angel didn't even use the plural, brothers, in his rebuke. It was like Sam was invisible.

Unlike Sam, Laman and Lemuel got lots of attention. Lehi named a river after Laman and a valley after Lemuel. He pleaded with them, coaxed them, promised them all kinds of blessings if they'd just behave. It didn't seem to affect them at all. No matter what Lehi or Nephi did, they didn't like it. They murmured, and murmured their whole lives long.

Sam was just the opposite. He was no trouble to anybody. When Lehi told his family they were going to leave their beautiful home in Jerusalem, to go on a big never-ending camping trip Sam never even blinked. They traveled in the wilderness for years, nearly starved to death, built a boat, then sailed half-way around the world to a new land. After they were finally settled in their new home, the Lord told Nephi to split up with Laman and Lemuel and move to another part of the country. Sam went along with all of it. He never murmured; he never resisted; he never doubted; he never even hesitated. He did what he was told and did it the best he could. Sam was solid as a rock, and we hardly hear anything about him.

Have you ever heard of a Samite? There were Nephites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, Jacobites, Josephites, and even Ishmaelites, but no Samites are mentioned.

Sam had a wife and children, that point is clear from the scriptures. So where are the Samites?

When Lehi blessed his family for the last time he pleaded with Laman and Lemuel to repent so he could give them his first blessing. Then he blessed Zoram, who wasn't even a blood relative. He used a chapter each talking to Jacob and Joseph, Sam's younger brothers. Then he called up all the sons and daughters of Laman and blessed them, the sons and daughters of Lemuel and blessed them, and Ishmael's whole household and blessed them. Finally, he blessed Sam. It was a nice blessing, but short, like his name. It doesn't say anything about Lehi calling up Sam's sons and daughters and blessing them.

Alma is the last prophet in the Book of Mormon to mention Sam. Once again he is a part of a group, and though he is the oldest of the righteous sons of Lehi mentioned, he is listed last: "...brethren, who consisted of Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph, and Sam, who were just and holy men." Though all four brothers were pronounced "just and holy men" by the prophet Alma, Sam is the only one who seems never to have been given any significant office or calling in the Church.

Good old steady Sam, always faithful, always obedient, never complaining, never doubting, often over-looked, and even forgotten. When the sealed plates are translated, I hope they'll find a chapter or two dedicated to Sam, or a testimony from Nephi indicating his appreciation for his big brother and how much it meant to have Sam right there beside him through all those difficult times.

Come to think of it, there are a lot of "Sams" in the Church today. The "Sams" pay their tithing and fast offerings, and take good care of their home teaching families. They come early and help set up the chairs for the ward party and are the last ones to leave after the cleanup. They're not flashy, brilliant or exceptional. They're trustworthy, honest and dependable. They're not what you'd call gifted men; they're giving men. Giving is as natural to them as filling the air with fragrance is to a gardenia

bush. They don't give because they've been told to or to earn a reward. They give because they can, and they will keep on giving as long as there is a need for what they have to give.

Like Sam of old, they are often neglected, ignored and overlooked by their contemporaries, but I'm sure our father in Heaven notices them. He probably takes a special pleasure in watching them quietly going about doing good. The Savior talked about people who do good in secret. He said his Father would reward them openly. Maybe on Judgment Day, when everybody's paying attention, the "Sams" will be recognized in some dramatic way for all they've done. I can see our Father in Heaven calling them up in front of that great concourse of people and thanking them publicly for being so humble and faithful all their lives.

On second thought, that might not be such a good idea. All that attention would be sure to make the "Sams" uncomfortable. They wouldn't understand what all the fuss was about. They did not do good to get praise, they did it because it needed doing. I suppose if you were to ask the "Sams" what they would like as a reward for their long lives of service, they'd settle for a nod of approval from the Savior and a quiet "well done" just loud enough for them to hear.

John Dryden said it best: "Virtue is its own reward."

There's a Fine Line Between Fishing and Standing on the Shore, Looking Like an Idiot

by Jake Ellingson

With the last look of encouragement from your kids, you can now begin what your offspring consider the "coolest" thing in the world. The last words that run through your head are those of the woman you married and who bore these children you are now trying to get closer to, "You're going to kill yourself, dear."

Forty five years of life now hang in the balance. When you were 18 you threw for 345 yards, and 5 touchdowns against Central High, in the 1972 state football championship, a state record that still stands. At 21 you bench pressed 315 pounds, and you drove a 1963 cherry red Corvette. You were someone then. Your glorious forty-five years of life and service pass before your eyes, and before you are pummelled into history you ask for a review of those glory days. Remember when you gave that money to the homeless guy, and of course, you always helped your kids on their school projects. Who could forget all of the Girl Scout cookies you've bought? Every year you helped those girls out. You even let your wife hold the remote control sometimes. A great father and husband is what you are, a saint, and now a martyr. You look for sympathy from that loving five-year-old daughter who wouldn't trade you away for the world. You just taught her how to ride her bike. "Just do it dad, you big wimp head!" is screamed from your treasure. Maybe she doesn't love you as much as you thought.

"Yeah well at least I'm not scared of the dark," you reassure yourself. Feeling the slight nudges from the instructor who, like you, is in the so called "prime of his

life," you wonder if this whole ordeal has anything to do with that new life insurance policy you took out last week.

Your worst fears run through your head, "The world is against me. My own wife and kids have turned on me." You don't know what to do. You look behind you and see Benedict Arnold, Lee Harvey Oswald, and the Grim Reaper. You're torn between the thoughts of an assassination attempt and the realization that you're looking mighty stupid in front of your family.

So you think; 'Okay, I'm 200' above the ground. This is a sturdy bridge. Look, it's all steel. I've seen people do this before, it's safe. Even if the rope breaks I will hit the water. Of course at that speed it will be like hitting cement face first. I am going to die. Okay man, think... think..." Tranquillity takes over your psyche as you realize, "Maybe I can reason with the instructor." In a soft whisper, you get out the words, "A hundred dollars if you get me down from here."

You hear the only acceptable response, "Sure thing big fella."

You've done it! He understands how foolish this whole situation is and what a mistake it is for you to be here. In just a second, he will tell everyone you can't go because of some defect in the system.

"Okay everyone." You wonder what ingenious explanation he's going to give to the awe stricken audience. "Here he goes."

The next thing you know, that pat on the back as congratulations and thanks-for-trying turns into a shove that just about knocks you unconscious. Not that unconscious would be bad as you realize you're doing Mach 2 toward the ground. The blood that used to fill your cranium has now retreated to the tips of your toes, as you plummet head first with destiny. Your life is now played back unedited with all the lies you told included, there is now an open communication with God.

For back up, your arms begin to flap in an uncontrollable manner, somewhat like an ostrich. Making promises

and confessions that would make any priest retire, you begin to notice the ground retreating as quickly as it was coming. The flapping the arms worked. You begin to thank the heavens that you are now headed to, and take back some of those foolish promises you just made. After all, you saved yourself with the flapping. As quickly as that thought crosses your mind, you are propelled back toward the earth. "I'm screwed," is about the only line you can get through your mind. But just as before, you spring back up and repeat this yo-yo type motion for about the next minute. The image of human punchball comes to mind as you slow to a halt.

With the reminder of what you had for dinner last night, you are slowly reeled back up to the pedestal from which you were so rudely thrust. Your head fills with your six quarts of blood as thoughts of brotherly love for the instructor race through your mind; "I'm going to kill that %@#\$!* idiot when I get my hands on him."

Riley's Bungee Jumping company has struck another unsuspecting victim. Being hauled up like the big fish who didn't get away because his feet were tied by the ankles, the first eyes you meet in the crowd are those of the five-year-old treasure who referred to you as a "wimp-head" just minutes ago.

"Wow, Dad!" are the next two words you hear from this literary giant.

Maybe those Berenstein Bear stories you have been reading her are more true to life than you thought. You look toward the eighteen-year-old boy expecting to hear the same thing.

"Dude, that had to be the funniest thing I'd ever seen."

All this coming from the one who fell off the roof because his friends hit him in the head with some wet underwear. Now looking to Riley, the owner of this hellish contraption and whose adolescent action of pushing you off a perfectly good bridge could never be justified, he tries to defend himself with, "All you said was get me down from here."

You are laid down on the platform and released from the "Harness of Hell". You close your eyes and review the last five minutes of your life. Realizing you won't die a martyr, you decide that you will not be repeating this activity any time soon. You open your eyes with the thudding sound of footsteps charging toward your head. All you see is a flash of what appears to be a pair of Chuck Taylor All-Stars clearing you. Quickly you look over the edge and hear the hooting and hollering of the boy you thought you could impress. For all 200' feet he looked more like a swan than an ostrich. With the harness around his waist, he would fly and flip through the yo-yo action.

"I could do that," you tell yourself. "It's no big deal." Your attention is quickly redirected with a kiss on your cheek. You look into the eyes of the woman who said you'd kill yourself. "Well, I'm still here," you claim chuckling. She joins in the chuckle and whispers, "I thought you looked pretty cool." When the five-year-olds weight plummets into your chest, you realize that looking cool and being cool are two different things.

The Shy Arriver

by Robert Maddock

I'll find the courage to attend your caper,
Where gilded confetti of priggishness drifts.
I'll bring you a present wrapped in blue paper,
And set it aside from your prettier gifts.

I'll tread like a lamb through your glittering lair,
Where puffing begins and humility stops.
Unlike your cronies with vanity flair,
I'm hardly the cream of your popular crops.

I'll meekly accept your kind invitations
And enter the realm of your glorious beaus.
I'll be the outcast of posh conversations,
The unwanted fleck on the cheek of a rose.

I'll come to your sumptuous celebration,
But I won't flaunt words and I won't brandish airs.
I'll slink to the background of decoration,
Where ribbons on banisters weave up your stairs.

I'll stand in your fanfare on one condition;
Pretend I blend in with the lines on the walls.
Unlike your eloquent friends of ambition,
I'm hardly the star who this gala entralls.

I'll sit at your banquet with just this request,
Please let me adhere to the least wanted chair.
I'll pose as the most inconspicuous guest,
And when I am gone, you won't know I was there.

Headstart

by Kory Collier

The hymn said name them one by one.
I thought, well look at that-
(your tiny hands held tight my thumbs)
there's ten right off the bat.

Leeiki

by Jenica Lee



Dirty Plastic

by Jim Baker

During the Fall 1996 semester, I was asked by the university library to display my artwork in the glass cases by the reference desk. Wheeling them along in plastic boxes on a cart, I asked the library secretary for the keys to the cases so I could set up my display. She asked what I was going to show, more out of curiosity than out of a need to know; I responded that I was putting in a collection of plastic models, mostly military airplanes. Her disdainful response was, "Oh, toys."

When I replied that some of my "toys" required over a hundred hours of work to complete, and a couple of them had over two hundred hours' work invested in them, she sniffed that it didn't matter; they were still toys. I invited her to look at them when I finished setting the display up. She said she would, but even though the collection sat less than a minute's walk from where she spends nine hours a day working, it wasn't until I warned her two months later that I was dismantling the display soon that she finally deigned to view it. Even though she grudgingly admitted that they were skillfully done, she reiterated that they were still toys. I decided then that there was no convincing her—if she wanted to see my models as toys, no amount of argument would change her mind.

Since that rather startling brush with narrow-mindedness, I myself have often wondered why I build models. I think that at first it was a way to keep a connection to my father following my parents' divorce. My dad lives airplanes—he eats, breathes, and sleeps airplanes, especially his own plane. He builds models to stay close to the airplanes, and since I was the only one of his children who stuck with modeling, our entire relationship was built on model airplanes. Once a month, our weekend outing was a trip to the Phoenix, Arizona chapter meeting of the International Plastic Modelers Society, or IPMS, where we

would sit around model-laden tables in a hobby shop with a bunch of guys who were a lot older than I was and talk airplane models.

When I was in elementary school I wanted to be just like him. I would often get scolded by my teachers for drawing pictures of airplanes on my school papers. I would take models to school to play with at recess; I vividly remember running around the playground in fifth grade holding aloft a little Corsair, making engine noises and pretending to shoot down my friends' Messerschmitts and Mustangs. The swing were airplane cockpits too, and we were fighter pilots in our little rubber-strap ejector seats, chasing MiGs and. Occasionally when our planes were hit by a missile, "ejecting" at full swing and falling heavily to the ground. Then, when I saw my dad on the weekends, I would tell him of my heroic exploits and proudly show him my latest airplane model. He would sound appropriately impressed, and suggest ways to improve my work of art.

My mother could not understand my obsession with models. I think that all the little airplanes reminded her too vividly of my father, and although she largely financed my military aircraft procurement program, she showed no real interest. My brother, on the other hand, showed marked interest in my models—he teased me incessantly about them. He and his friends would come into my room and seem to show genuine interest in whatever airplane I happened to be working on, and then roll their eyes: "Oh, it's a Stuka B 734598!! Wow!" Eventually, I learned to ignore their feigned fascination, and treated my brother and his thespian friends with the same disdain with which they treated me. But I still continued to build models, just like my dad.

We moved to Hawaii in 1981, and suddenly I didn't see my dad on the weekends any more. Three thousand miles of open water precluded our regular communication, but I still built models. I remembered the thousands of little 1/72 scale airplanes that my dad had in his study,

the cases upon cases of pristine examples of almost every type of airplane flown during the Second World War, and I wanted to have a collection just like it. I built anything I could lay my hands on: Ships, airplanes, cars, spacecraft. I even built a tank once. Using my own money, I subscribed to all the modeling magazines I could find—FineScale Modeler, Scale Modeler, and others—and devoured all the articles, experimenting with many of the techniques, trying new products, and ruining a lot of model kits in the process.

As I built my models, I read about the airplanes I was miniaturizing on my worktable. I read about the mercenary pilots of the American Volunteer Group, the Flying Tigers, who successfully defended much of China from a vastly superior Japanese Army Air Force. I read about the British pilots in the Battle of Britain, fighting for the very life of their nation under heavy German onslaught. I read about American bomber crews, plunging headlong into a maelstrom of busting flak and swirling, deadly German fighters, without friendly fighter escort. I learned voraciously, barely giving my overactive imagination time to digest the last book before I started a new one. I was beginning to feel the airplanes as I built them. I flew them around the house, imagining them to be assigned to the U.S. 8th Air Force in England or to No. 323 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force in New Guinea, or to Jadeschwader 26 at Abbeville, France.

As I read, I discovered many little-known facts about the airplanes from the pilots who flew them. I learned that most fighter pilots on both sides of World War II put masking tape over the gun ports of their airplanes to eke another three miles per hour from them. I learned that the landing gear of the vaunted Messerschmitt 109s and the Supermarine Spitfires was weak and tended to collapse on rough ground, making the airplanes tricky to handle. I learned that the fuel filler caps of all P-51 Mustangs were painted red, and that the U.S. Marine Wildcat fighters on Midway Island and Guadalcanal only

carried one external fuel tank when flying missions, on the starboard wing pylon, because the Marines were short of fuel tanks.

I began to apply what I had learned to my models, and became a self-appointed expert overnight on making my models not only historically accurate but also look real. I spent countless hours on studying how paint on a combat aircraft fades when exposed to the elements, and how it chips and scrapes when crewmen clamber onto the wings to service balky wing cannon. I discovered that U.S Army Olive Drab turns yellowish when it burns behind the exhaust pipes of an aircraft engine, and that all Japanese aircraft were painted with acrylic paints, which began peeling from the aluminum skin almost from the moment it was applied. I was fascinated that the markings on American airplanes actually were decals, just like the models I was building. I put more and more detail into my work as I progressed, just because I could. I didn't know it at the time, but what for my father was a hobby had for me become an art form; it had become my medium of expression.

Pared down to its most basic components, modeling is nothing more than gluing pieces of plastic together and then painting them. Sure, some of those pieces of plastic can cost into the hundreds of dollars (one of my kits retails for \$145.00), but essentially it's still glued-together pieces of plastic. But if you want to look at it that way, Picasso's hobby was soiling canvas with oil paints, and Michaelangelo's hobby was banging away at large rocks with a chisel. When you look at it in this way, all kinds of art looks ridiculous. In reality, nothing is inherently "art"—art is the when the sum of the pieces become greater than the whole. Art is what the viewer experiences when he comes in contact with the creation. Picasso's media were oil paint and canvas; Michaelangelo's were marble and paint. My medium is plastic—little re-cut plastic pieces to which I add more plastic, paint, metal, wire, and sometimes hundreds of

hours of work, to create my own interpretation of reality; my art.

My model display shelves contain a record of military aviation from early World War II to the present. I look at the small plastic airplanes sitting there gathering dust and I am transported into their world—a world of whirling propeller blades, castor oil, and cordite stains; a world of flashing red hinomaru on Japanese bombers diving on anchored American battleships; a world of outmoded and undergunned Polish PZL fighters desperately trying to stave off a disastrous end for Poland in 1939; a world of non-specular intermediate-blue U.S Navy fighters desperately trying to keep up with a significantly more advanced enemy; a world of heavy bombers struggling unescorted against the very best of Goring's Luftwaffe in the war-torn skies over Germany. These are not just models; they represent what once was real. Men bled and died in what these pieces of dirty plastic portray. Men just like me sacrificed their hopes and dreams, spiraling towards the earth in shattered cockpits. They are still real. Some of them survived.

In the fall of 1979, the Pima Air Museum in Tucson, Arizona, finished restoring its rare Boeing B-29 Superfortress as a non-flying static display, and invited a number of famous people to witness the unveiling. My dad took me, and I was excited to attend because people I had read about were there: "Pappy" Boyington of Black Sheep Squadron fame; Saburo Sakai, top-scoring Japanese ace; Bob Scott, former Flying Tiger and author of the book *God is My Co-Pilot*. There were others, whose names I don't remember—I just remember faces. When they passed through the galvanized chain-link entrance gate, the years seemed to melt away and once again they were energetic, young aerial warriors, talking animatedly with each other as brothers in arms. The museum's staff had managed to track down the original crew of the B-29, and had flown them out as the guests of honor. They lined up in front of the gleaming bomber with smiles on their faces,

and as the short ceremony concluded acknowledge the cheers of the throng. Still smiling proudly, they clambered aboard their airplane once more to remember. The event was over.

The crowd dispersed, splitting into ones and twos. The crew members, no longer grinning, swung out of the hatches of the giant B-29 and joined the wanderers. They walked silently among the rows of old airplanes, wingtip shoes crunching on the gravel paths, neckties flapping in the chill desert wind. They stopped in front of each airplane, some of them pointed, others nodded, but one spoke a word. Tears streamed unchecked down the checks of these hardened combat veterans. I turned away, allowing them dignity in their moments of unabashed reverie. I could not join them. What they had seen, and what they then saw, was a mystery I can never know.

One December Seventh many years later, I was at the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial, alone behind a table festooned with models (not all of them mine), when a matronly tourist approached me. Her day-glo, flower-print muumuu swished as she gave the models a cursory glance, and inquired what they were there for. I explained that on Pearl Harbor and Memorial Days our IPMS chapter displays models commemorating World War II in the Pacific Ocean. She then asked my age, and I truthfully replied that I as nineteen. She looked surprised, and blurted, "You're nineteen, and you still play with these things?" Toys.

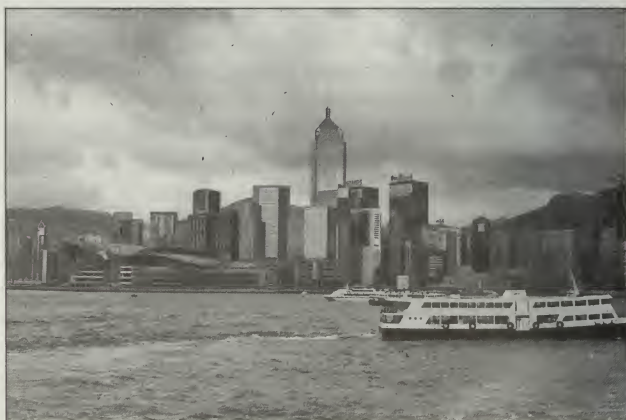
While I was trying to validate modeling to her, an ancient Japanese mad toddled up to the table. He bent over the models, studying them, appreciating them. He examined each model individually, especially the models of the Japanese airplanes. I watched him, ever on guards, alert for those who would accidentally destroy a model or even try to walk away with one. Every once in a while he would glance up at me with an unreadable expression on his face, and then go back to his tour of inspection. Finally, after half an hour of silent scrutiny, he indicated a

model of an Aichi D3Y dive bomber, which the Americans called the “Val,” and pointed to the rear gunner’s compartment. Extremely conscious of his obviously limited English, he stammered—“My Place.”

My Place. Those words won that man my instant respect—he had been there, as a rear gunner in a slow, underarmed and underarmored bomber, hiding behind a tiny machine gun, completely at the mercy of hunting American fighters. This gnarled old man, stooped and peering through Coke-bottle-thick glasses lenses, had survived the hell of a world war to help create a better world. He was proud of his place in the airplane—his place in history. I was proud of him, too. He had been there. I had built the model. The neon woman had wandered away.

Harbour View

by Todd Chen



Hatred

by Anya Lene Latu

Blood splattered
on the clear white wall of innocence
with the ooze of jealousy
the fungi of greed
the bacteria of lies
mingled with the stench of betrayal

Untitled

by Becky Hilton



My Journal

by Kristal Williams

Let it be my comfort at the day's end
my friend without judgment
my unconditional listener

a tangible vision of my thoughts
of my emotions and of my days

the treasure chest of my dreams
the grave of my nightmares

let it be my glass slipper
when the fairy tale has ended

and even I remain no more.

Life Climb

by Bryce Tomita

White wall, towering granite, top-roped to climb
On belay? Belay on. Climbing. Climb on.
Faith in my belayer, and taut life line,
My foot to wall edge, hand to jut, climbing on.

Hand to cleft and foot to wedge, higher, I move.
Leg stem, hand smear, single finger hold, my
Foot to ledge, I study the pocket above
and lunge, clinging, bucket hold. None else I

See but, "To the right," speaks by belayer. Right.
Hand searching and body burning, focused.
Strain and feel, search, search and search, then grasp
tight
The hold and struggle, then conquer the Crux!

Tis my belayer whom I do glorify.
Twas He when my strength and hope abated,
Through great wisdom, advice and hope supplied.
I did wholly rely on the merits of Him.

2 Nephi 31:19

Definitions to Terminology

"Top-roped" climbing form - A rope is run from the climber's waist through a ring secured at the top of a rock cliff, then back down to the climber's partner.

Belayer - The climber's partner. A belayer controls the length of rope while the climber ascends and descends. The belayer's main job is to stop a climber's fall using the rope.

"On belay?" - Climber asks the belayer if all is ready.

"Belay on." - Belayer's response if all is ready.

A Limerick

by Robert Maddock

There once was a germ so contagious,
Its legend seemed grossly outrageous;
It killed bad magicians,
And most politicians...
So maybe it was advantageous.

Old Stuff

by Bryn Starr



Sacred Falls

by Michael Sarafian



The Island of Proco

by Wen-Chi Chen

On the island of Proco, there were only two kinds of people. One kind was called Pro, and the other kind was called Co. No matter what kind of people a person was, the final purpose for every islander's life was to accomplish the divine calling given by the supreme creator. It was to cross the dangerous ocean on the north shore, and look for the land of Procolite, a most beautiful and bountiful land where their supreme creator was known to dwell.

No one on the island of Proco had ever met the supreme creator. All they knew about their creator came from an ancient painting on the wall that illustrated how their ancestors crossed the north shore pair by pair, and the legends passed down by the older generations before they left for their journeys. Since no one ever returned from the journey and shared further knowledge, older islanders just passed down their training to the younger generations before they left.

Neither did they know how long the journey might last, for they were simply told that when their beloved islanders reached the land of Procolite, the supreme creator would be so happy that he would make a rainbow across the sky. The rainbow was known to be a symbol of the creator's love and a sign of the islanders' courage to pass through all the challenges and become great Procoliters.

For all of her life Veena was trained to be a good Co. She was quick to tend to the needs of people and knew how to support a Pro in whatever was requested. She handled daily chores with wit and efficiency. A lot of Pros yearned for her company to cross the ocean, for they knew how blessed it would be to have such a great companion on their challenging mission. Veena never took a look at any one of them. She knew what she wanted. He

was a quiet young man who lived across the street with one of the older islanders. His name was Lupati.

Lupati was a person with sympathy and love. Just like all other young Pros, he followed the older islanders and learned whatever a Pro needed to do. He was trained to take the lead in teams and made thorough decisions. He also did his best to provide and protect the other islanders. Many other candidates could be his ideal Co, but Veena owned all of his heart and love.

They decided to take the journey together to the land of Procolite. They bid farewell to their beloved islanders and started their mission. They were not sure what lay ahead but they believed that no matter what happened, at least they had each other.

As soon as their boat glided into the ocean, they started to learn more and more about what "challenge" really meant. Being a Co was not a new responsibility for Veena at all. A Co was expected to be good at consoling the Pro, be cooperative and nurturing. She had been prepared for all of her life to be successful in this role. However, to carry on the responsibility with great patience and perseverance was quite another story. As Veena became more and more familiar and efficient with a Co's daily tasks, Lupati seemed to be less and less qualified for the title of a Pro. With the changeable mood of the sea, the variable weather, and the unknown destination, Veena could easily sense the inner fear of Lupati for the unpredictable future. She secretly bore grudges against his powerlessness and uncertainty. She had done her best to achieve a Co's role, but Lupati was not worthy to be called a Pro. He puzzled over major decisions, he knew little how to share her sorrow or work load, and he lacked the confidence she needed to rely on so much in their seemingly endless journey. It could take them forever to finally set their feet on the prestigious land of Procolite. The day would come and she would know that she had chosen a wrong Pro, a wrong leader.

Lupati was sharp in most daily decisions, but the major ones were all so new to him that he usually needed to spend a tremendous amount of time on weighing the choices involved. He loved Veena so much that he didn't want to take any risk to rush to a conclusion that would later break her heart or endanger their relationship. He knew pretty well that a good Pro needed to provide and protect his beloved Co. These two responsibilities were not hard for him to achieve, but he sometimes, now most of the time, doubted his own ability to lead her through the journey. Veena had been trained for all of her life to sink her feet deep down into the ground—to work with well-developed plans and to be practical. Lupati's training was more of a thinking process. The problems he needed to tackle were not something visible or foreseeable. By observing Veena's proficiency in making arrangements to meet their daily needs, a feeling of incompatibility surged inside him. He was overwhelmed with the fear of an unexpectant future and the fear of losing the trust and love from Veena. He tried to help Veena as much as he could. However he was so clumsy from lack of experience at a Co's job, the numerous mistakes he made, instead made him look even worse. In great despair, he felt the gap between Veena and himself widen and deepen.

Veena had a hard time treating her Pro with respect. Lupati gave her no guarantees on any aspects in life. He couldn't promise what their future would be. He said sooner or later they would discover the land of Procolite. When? How? Why could he be so sure? They had been in the center of the sea for months. No land had been found. How much longer did they have to be like this? Lupati said, "We'll see."

Knowing that he could no longer win her confidence, Lupati kept mostly to himself and became less talkative. Veena performed her duties faithfully with greater efforts, half out of her sense of responsibility, and the other half out of wanting to contrast Lupati's inability to compete with her in playing his part. Lupati humbly accepted her

way of showing sorrow and apprehension. She had put herself into his hands with great anticipation. At this very moment, even he himself doubted his own ability. How could he expect his Co to trust him? He needed time to prove himself. He needed opportunity. He hoped the opportunity would soon come, if not today, then tomorrow. The desire to regain his position soared in his mind so high, that he could almost see the land of Procolite standing out in front of his eyes. He couldn't tell when, but in his vision, he knew he would find it someday. He wanted to win Veena back. He wanted to prove that their work was not in vain.

It was a stuffy and warm summer afternoon. Veena finished her daily chores and sat quietly on the edge of the boat. Gently and rhythmically, she patted the surface of the sea with her palm, feeling the softness of the water as it flowed through her fingers. Contemplating the time she had spent with Lupati on the island of Proco, she missed the innocence of those days. It was easy to enjoy shallow happiness when the future was out of sight. She raised her eyes and looked around. Nothing new. Everything was the same as yesterday. In fact, everything had been the same for months since they left the island of Proco. Then she looked at Lupati.

Lupati sat attentively in front of her, he was strong young man of medium stature. Even though Veena could only see his back, she knew the look in his eyes. His eyes were always filled with humility and tenacity. The endless journey had almost exhausted both of them, but Veena had never heard a word of complaint from Lupati, not even a word of doubt about their mission. The only thing that worried him was if he could carry on the responsibility of being a Pro—to provide the necessary guidance and protection along the way to the island of Procolite. His hands rested firmly on the oars, his dark skin covered with tiny drops of sweat that shone brightly under the sun. Tears streaked down Veena's cheeks as a

feeling of shame overcame her. How could she blame such a nice partner for not being able to fulfill his role? He had tried hard enough to meet the criteria of a successful Pro. He had done his best, though his best was not as convincing as an ideal Pro in her heart. Veena was so lost in her thoughts that she didn't notice the clouds gathered behind them. The winds were changing. "Veena." She looked up at Lupati as his voice calmly reached her, "a storm is coming." Following his eyes, Veena turned around and saw the thick clouds advancing, like waves of dark smoke chasing after them.

Lupati set up a tent on top of the boat firmly and skillfully and asked Veena to stay inside. "No matter what happens, Veena, stay in the tent." The winds started to roar. Lupati lowered the canvas, stood at the end of the boat with an oar to keep the boat facing the right direction. The rain came abruptly and heavily. Soon the sky turned dark. Veena could barely see Lupati except as a vague figure constantly shifting position in the dark. "Lupati!" Veena worried as her ears were filled with the sound of the storm. "I'm fine, don't worry." Lupati quickly yelled back. He panted for a while, "We can make it," he said, "as long as I can keep controlling the boat. We'll be fine." Veena sat quietly in the tent with shivers all over her body. The sea was raging, with every wave pushing the boat from side to side; many times the boat was almost engulfed. The tent Lupati built kept the rain away but not the waves that poured water into the boat. Veena had to use a bucket to dump the water out.

Hours went by and Veena's arms were exceedingly sore. In deep fear, she called again, "Lupati." The figure in the dark turned toward her, and she heard his voice affirming, "I'm here. The storm is leaving, Veena." "No! It's not," Veena cried, "It's not. The rain is still so heavy and the water keeps coming in." In the dark, Veena felt the figure slowly make its way toward her, Lupati kissed her on her forehead and whispered, "The oar is in my hand, Veena. I can feel the sea is calming and now I know

we're still on the right way. I have pledged my life to keep you from harm. Trust me. Don't be afraid." Lupati returned to the end of the boat and put the oar back into the sea. His words were so strong that Veena felt the peace and faith in his heart. She sobbed silently in the tent. She shed her first tear in the frightening storm, not because of fearing what might happen to them but because of understanding Lupati better than ever.

"Look ahead, Veena." She turned around and saw rays of light penetrating through the clouds and alighting upon the wavy sea. The rain gradually stopped and the sea reflected a world of golden light melting into the gray blue sky. Everything was beautiful. Soon behind the source of light, they saw the mountain top on the island of Procolite. The clouds were slowly fading away, leaving a colorful rainbow. Now they knew why there were always rainbows when their beloved islanders got to this island. They also realized now why the legend told that the rainbow was a symbol of true love that the creator gave the islanders and a sign of courage that the islanders had passed through all the challenges and become great Procoliters. The journey and the storm was meant to bring the Pro and the Co closer to each other through love and sacrifice. It was not a competition to prove who was smarter than the other. It was a way for both of them to be blessed with growth through their tolerance in patiently waiting for the one who had fallen behind. Looking at the rainbow with pride and joy, both of them felt that the true meaning of love had just been unveiled to them.

Asteroids

by Jim Baker

They're out to get you, those
Rocks out in space
Silly little things
All you have to do is shoot them all

New level, level three
They're coming faster now
Many more in level four
Stay alive through level five

Once in a while a little saucer comes
It's an alien craft, firing
Random bullets
Kill it before it kills you

Keep pushing those buttons
Working that joystick
Frantically
Desperately
Just hanging on
Until your quarter runs out.

the Achilles Heart

by Shannon Hansen

there were tears
when they severed the torpid cord,
to render my start-
i was brought in to suffer,
brought in with an Achilles heart

i had a hole
that blocked out the beauteous songs
in report
they painted my canvas in fear
a portrait of the Achilles heart

My screams within
my sadness paraded tickets
to the court
my pain in sensational mockery
sensational was my Achilles heart

than a Man i met
who was full of otherness, friendship
firm, off the chart
called what i had broken "Right"
strong had become my Achilles heart.

A Fiery Thief

by Naomi Neale

When I was a child of eight, I was filled with the excitement of discovering the world surrounding my protected existence. This protected world, however, was about to be invaded by a force from which there was no true protection. Fire comes like a thief, with no warning or justification, leaving as quickly and quietly as it arrived. Fire came into my world of fantasy and make-believe, turning to ashes the many childhood dreams I used to define my life. This fiery thief came on a day that started out like any other February day of the past

The day opened with a beautiful summer's morning, birds singing and the gum tree leaves rustling in the wind as my sister and I, along with a couple of friends, walked to school along the dusty road. We discussed the events of school that lay before us, wondering if the day would finally get hot enough to close early. Yet school seldom, if ever, closed because of soaring temperatures. But every summer, we always hoped that this would be the summer. Instead of wishing for snow, we wished for high temperatures that would allow us off school to play in the heat.

School began just like any other middle-of-the-week day. The weather was still hot. The landscape surrounding the school was mostly a pale golden brown. The leaves, even though still green, were crisp to the touch. But the school was an oasis because every evening the gardeners turned on the sprinklers to make sure the surrounding oval stayed green. We played sports and had school competitions on the oval. We could even see the oval from the classroom, making us wish that we did not have to be in school. Inside the classroom, the air conditioner hummed beneath the classroom noise.

But soon, the wind seemed to grow in strength as the day aged. The blistering heat whistled around the buildings and through the now empty playground where the

sand particles bombarded the open ground as the wind swept them along. The wind became so strong we were not allowed to go outside during recess. I pressed my nose against the window, watching the wind ripple through the grass, scattering grass cuttings and particles across the open ground. I so longed to be the wind, so I too could play outside and feel the warmth of the sun heating my unprotected skin.

By lunchtime, even the birds had disappeared, trying to escape both the heat and pelting winds. Suddenly, the principal's voice came over the intercom. We were finally going outside, but only to gather in the main assembly hall.

There, the Principal informed us of a bush fire. Because of the strong winds, the fire was blazing almost out of control and threatening some of the outlying farms. Some of the older students started to cry, worrying about their families, and homes. The school was officially closing.

Slowly many of the students left as their parents came to pick them up. I had been waiting on the blue mat with a girl named Johanna. She was younger than I was but we had ballet together. Her brother Robert was in my class. They had a farm outside of town. She worried if her mum would be able to pick her up. In the end, my sister and I, Jackie, Catherine and my brother James were the last ones left to leave. Mum had been in town doing shopping and had difficulty getting home to pick us up because of the strong winds.

Once mum had picked us up, we went home to prepare for the worst, the fire reaching the town. We filled our bathtub with water, in case we lost electricity. Mum also asked us to fill the tub with all the towels that we could find. The wet towels were then used to block the gaps beneath the door to stop any smoke or ash getting into the house. Mum also prepared candles and food, in case we had to leave in a hurry. Then we waited. I don't think we waited long, but it was hard to tell. The sky changed so quickly from the clear blue to black as the sky filled with smoke. Mum also did not want to leave with-

out dad, but he was still at work. By early afternoon, the smell of smoke hung in the air. In the distance the smoke rose from the brown, flat landscape as the fire marched forward. At four, the sky was becoming black as night. The pine trees burning in the distance appeared as a wall of flames, rising from the blackened landscape to dance over the burning ashes of trees that had once stood so straight and tall. Even the posts hemming the fields were burning, appearing as little sentry men guarding our little town from the fire's invasion. Sadly, nothing would slow this raging animal from devouring what stood within its path as the wind fanned the roaring flames.

Finally, as the fire got closer, Mum bundled us into our old Ford Valiant, a tight squeeze to fit seven kids as well as the dog, since it was only made to seat five. We could no longer wait for Dad to come home. We had been advised to go to the town football oval, one of the few large grassy areas left from the long summer. It would offer some protection from the engulfing fire. As we slowly backed out of the driveway, something thumped the back of the car. We couldn't really see through the soot and smoke. Even the car headlights did not offer much help. Luckily, Dad made the thump on his push-bike arriving home from work. The fire had come close to the sawmill, but they had been able to stop the fire from getting too close, especially to the scrap wood piles situated behind the plant.

Now we drove through town to get to the football field. We could see where the fire was staking claim, consuming what lay in its path. It had already reached the outskirts of town. Red fingers clutched and licked at the land, turning life to black ashes beneath its fiery touch. Going over the railway crossing, we were guided not by the safety lights, but the fiery flames that we were trying to escape. Closer to the football oval, we could see houses burning with other houses in between untouched by this raging beast. Did this fire have a mind of its own as to what it consumed and if so why had it chosen us?

Lots of people had reached the oval. The field was covered with a sea of vehicles surrounded by a forever-darkening sky. Because our car was small, Dad and Lassie, the dog got out of the car to lie underneath it away from the thickening smoke. We couldn't tell the time from the sky except for the sun, or maybe the moon, was trying to break through, a dark red spot in the sky. Even though we were safe, I could hear the crackling and hiss of the fire dancing over the burning embers of what had been once my world. Every so often tractors or cars would be caught in the fire's grasp, the fuel tanks exploding with a bang disrupted the quiet, continual hissing.

I am not sure how long we stayed there, or when we knew it was safe to leave. I think the fire marshal came to inform us that the fire had passed through. We just wondered what we would be heading back to, now that the fire had passed and the wind had changed directions. The change in wind directions made the fire turn back on it self in many areas, burning it out. Once we got home, our house was still standing and we were sent to bed. Nothing seemed out of place. The air smelt smoky, giving acidic taste within our mouths when you breathed. The only fire now was the small candle flame, shedding its soft light on the house walls, no longer an enemy, but a friend providing light to a darkened world. I tried to make sense of what was left of my little world and why these flames had to invade and destroy my protected innocent life. Then again, maybe my life was not destroyed but altered from what I once new. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, my life would also rise. This experience helped me to appreciate life, as well as death and rebirth. Even the still glowing light of my little sentry men offered no comfort. A few childhood illusions lived no longer. My little sentry men had returned to being wooden posts, then ashes feeding the endless hunger of the red beast.

The new day dawned. The sky once again was blue and clear, the only remnants left behind were black, smol-

dering posts and charred lots where homes had once stood. The odor of smoke lingered in the air, even though the wind tried its best to move it on. The after fires were small, but we feared that they too would grow into another fiery red beast.

There are no answers to why the fire left some houses standing and others as charred ruins. One can only appreciate life, to rise again from the ashes, only stronger. February 16th changed many lives. In my class there was now an empty seat, in my school two empty seats. In a family's life six places were left vacant that cannot be filled. Johanna and Robert, friends of my childhood will be remembered, long after the fire's blackened path is renewed. My town has not died, but continues to live for the land will not always remain black, as new growth reclaims that which was taken. I look back on this experience as a childhood memory. It gave me more understanding of life and the experiences yet to come. Life will always be filled with ups and downs, but like nature we learn to rise above the ashes of the past, preserving memories so that life of friends and family now gone can live on through us.

Courage

by Jerica B Lee

Why ask for things no one can give,
and not fear for the things for which we live?
Fear not, I say...or have it be
Without my mind, I cannot see.
Be strong, my friend
life seems so long.
Beware my friend and carry on.
Paths that are new
and harsh to tread
are the paths that lead us all ahead.

Beauty

by Kara Bang



First Sunday, Laie First Ward

Circa 1960

by Vernice Wineera

Strains of Hope of Israel float
in aromatic, laureled air
and trail through open windows
drawn by tradewinds blowing salt
into sacred wounds of care.
Then comes a father with his child
cradled as a shepherd holds a lamb,
his hands, man-sized,
gentled by compassion
for small creatures marvelous
to world-worn eyes.
Prayer laves walls
plastered with ancient paint
and washes over all
in accents of the Saints.
On crowded benches they sit,
sentinels before the glass and plate
and worship, like Lot,
never looking back,
never succumbing to the curious fate,
the salt-sour questioning
of things too wonderful to know.
These are the tasters of bread
fresh on fervent tongues.
Of wine turned to water,
kept until last days
herald the marriage feast.
These are the least, the last
who will be first to thirst
the best gifts given free.
The past revered in this bread,
these are the listeners of
His word
whose souls' eyes do not see
Him dead.
But alive, unbroken.
And adored.

The Message

by Kory Collier

It seemed so set and perfect,
yet the paper blankness of the covered ground
was quite defenseless to the shuffling pen.
Although the message was, no doubt,
intended for some higher floor,
its sprawling brevity was somehow mine.
As pages of my textbook turned themselves,
I watched her draw the first line,
then retrace her steps to start the next.
And when she did a splendid two-foot jump
to dot the I,
I wondered if she'd ever shown such grace
or such an honest healthy smile
with dry shoes on,
And then she ran off laughing,
dripping little spots of ink and leaving me
to wonder where I'd stored my gloves,
and why.

What If?

by Sam Dillabough

When I was growing up, my parents taught that the best way to avoid a fight was not to be there, so I took up running. Not track, mind you, but running away. I was always somewhat of a nerd. My favorite classes were choir and computers. I enjoyed fooseball, tetherball, and was often found in the library reading. My image in junior high was not a popular one and made me an easy target for bullies. I found, over the years, my mouth and my actions were often misunderstood by the average Neanderthal in school. You know the type. He (always a guy) was the biggest kid in the class. He didn't play sports and he wasn't really in any physical shape other than large, sometimes extra large. A small posse of guys followed him around, telling everybody how tough he was and making stories up to scare small kids. The scariest of these monsters had ugly scars, maybe a tattoo or two, and more often than not, smoked cigarettes. They always had names like Biff or Chuck. (Didn't you always love finding out their real or middle names? The good ones had names like Clarence, Clifford, or Lawrence. They would squirm, we snickered, when the teacher read the roll using their real names.) These were the guys who I could never avoid and I was always tormented by. So, I learned to run, fast.

Now, although I have never been a great or dedicated athlete, I've never been out of shape. Since I was raised in a military family, being out of shape was impossible, at least none of the boys in my family were. Even the girls or the runt of the litter had to be able to take the worst the older boys could dish out. Punishment in most families I knew usually consisted of spankings, grounding, or loss of privileges. Not in my house. Push-ups and sit-ups were the standard by which our father dealt his discipline. The degree of the crime determined the number and difficulty of the sentence. Sometimes we didn't do push-ups. If we were really bad we had to stay in push-up position

until Dad determined we had enough. Instead of just falling to the ground and giving up, because we would have preferred to avoid a spanking, we would cry, and ache until our fledgling arms buckled. After a while the punishment became easier and we even held contests just for the fun of it. Of course, that just lifted the number of push-ups required for punishment. We had a good system. When I was younger, from about five, the belt and the wooden spoon had held sway. Yet at the age of seven, my parent's mode of self-punishment was more excruciating and humiliating as well as efficient and effective.

At the age of eight, I became involved in amateur wrestling. My family trademark form of discipline was beneficial in this regard. It prepared me for the rigorous workouts that wrestling coaches pride themselves on. Of all the sports I know of, I think wrestling has the toughest practice regimen. You leave a practice five pounds lighter than when you started. From my third grade year, until I moved on to middle school, I had always wrestled on teams and in tournaments. I even won quite a bit. I was not really all that dedicated as other wrestlers. I didn't practice or run for miles like those who take their sport seriously. My only real practice consisted of wrestling/fighting with other siblings. I found that wrestling with my brothers and sisters was a great tool to hone the skills I had learned on the mat and to stop our constant squabbling. I learned, that by using some of the techniques I practiced with the team, I could subdue my younger siblings without having to throw a punch or cause great physical damage.

I had wrestling's fundamentals well in hand, but I wrestled because I enjoyed the physical challenge and competitive spirit. On my junior high school team I was a consummate back-up. When ever there was a weight division our team couldn't fill, I was the one the coach would call. My coach told me that my main objective was not to get pinned. I think I have only been pinned in one match my entire life. To this day I still disagree with that referee.

In school when you are on a sports team, everybody seems to know. In middle school however, wrestling was

never a popular sport, and those who wrestled never achieved any major fame from their feats on the mat. Still, people knew you were on one of the sports teams. This never worked to my advantage. In fact, in this particular instance I wished that nobody even knew we had a wrestling team.

I was never known well enough in school to have a nemesis, but I did have a particular group of people that I didn't like about as much as they didn't like me. I think you will find this element in any school you go to. They are outsiders, the rebels that think they are cool because they attempt to go against the accepted norm to the best of their ability. At my school they were the rockers or metal-heads. They listened to heavy metal, smoked cigarettes and skipped classes. They always knew the detention center attendant a little too well. They picked on the kids who nobody really knew too well or that had one of those characteristics that made them stand out. (Like the kid with the big mouthguard for his braces, or the kids that looked as if their parents picked their clothing, or the little scrawny kid in the corner with glasses with lenses an inch thick). I was an easy target for bullying. From elementary school through middle school, I was the butt of jokes and easily intimidated. I never had to worry about giving up my milk money, but more than once ended up losing my place in line or giving up a particular seat on the bus or in the classroom. I managed to avoid this element most times, but on one particularly bad day I, when I wasn't paying attention, I mistakenly crossed into their "turf."

I was coming back from my lunch break and walked by their smoked filled corner on the boundary of school property. Right next to the chain link fence surrounding the school, they had a small cement floor and wall, covered with graffiti from rival schools and local "wanna be" gangs. They hung out there almost all the time, even during classes, if they could avoid the school security which basically left them alone anyway. They had their backs turned to the school and were smoking and attempting to look tough and rebellious. They all wore jeans with holes torn in strategic places, and some sort of black T-shirt with a heavy metal band insignia or album cover on the front.

The leader (I think his name was Rocky) wore a black, faded, leather jacket. Rocky, the smallest of the three, saw me coming and made a comment to his entourage. They chuckled. Pulling the cigarette out of his mouth and puffing out a cloud full of smoke, he yelled for me to come over. As they stood between me and school, I saw no chance of escape. I shuffled over preparing for the worst. Each step was pure torture. I looked side to side, searching for an escape. Nobody was around, of course, and I steeled myself for a scathing flood of insults, bad language and jabs about my entire family.

When I reached them I put on my best non-aggressive face and even managed a somewhat weak, "What's up guys?"

Then came the insults "Man, where does your mom shop, K-Mart? Naw, they're too poor for that. They just pull stuff from the dumpster. Who do you think is uglier, his mom or the dog? I don't know, I can't tell the difference. Were you just born stupid or did you forget to get in line when the brains were handed out" On and on they went. Rocky then told me he had heard I was a wrestler and how wrestling was a sport for weirdos. He then told me that wrestling didn't look all that tough and told me that he would wrestle me. I tried to worm my way out of it, mainly because I didn't trust his two pals and would have preferred to just avoid a possible beating. Rocky insisted, despite my pleas about needing to get back for class. I relented and he then asked me how it was supposed to work.

I told him about a basic wrestling stance in which two wrestlers have a neutral and control position. The Neutral wrestler is on his hands and knees while the Control wrestler kneels to the side of the Neutral wrestler and places his left hand on the Neutral man's left elbow and his right hand on the Neutral man's stomach and the wrestling begins at a command from the referee. I volunteered to be the Neutral man and we both took our positions, all the while making comments to his friends about how he was going to make me look dumb.

I hunkered down onto the grassy hill next to their concrete kingdom. I reminded him how he was to start. He

gripped my elbow and reached over my back and around my stomach. Then I counted to three and we began. At first all I did was sit there while he attempted to bend or move me. I suddenly realized that my opponent was not weak or slow. Without thinking of the possible consequences, I decided to take advantage of my situation. With a surge of adrenaline, I turned my shoulders and grabbed Rocky by the head and pulled him over my back. I heard him sear as his shoulders bounced on the grass, and he realized this was not the position he wanted to be in. Then I quickly grabbed one of his legs and pulled his knee cap towards his face, close enough for him to kiss it. In wrestling we call this a cradle. I held him there for a few seconds, relishing the moment, until he yelled at me to let go. I reluctantly did so and as I stood up I realized what I had done. I was toast. He was going to have his pals turn me into hamburger.

His buddies, who had watched this all happen, stood there impassively and I awaited the fury of abuse I thought sure would come. But to my surprise and delight, nothing happened! Nothing was said as I slowly turned and walked back toward the school. The walk turned into a jog and then a full out run. I was thrilled and excited. I rushed into the school and never looked back. Unfortunately nobody had seen what had happened. I have often thought if someone would have seen what had taken place, I might have been a hero, at least for a day. I could have been the most popular kid in school. I had wrestled and handily beaten Rock! I knew they would never tell anybody, and nobody would believe me if I said anything, so I never did.

Later on in the week, or for the rest of the school year, I never saw much of Rocky and his gang. I am pretty sure they never amounted to much. I didn't see them in high school and heard at one point that Rocky had spent a fair bit of time in juvenile detention. I guess I won a little respect from him and his friends. They didn't like me any better, but they left be alone. I still got picked on by other bullies and survived. I still ran.

I never did much with wrestling. My sophomore year in high school was the last time I ever wrestled on a team.

I'm not quite sure why. I guess I got involved with other activities like Boy Scouts and clubs in school. Towards the end of my high school days, my afternoons became more reserved for time with friends and family, rather than sports and training. I have never been one to long for the limelight. I never tried to stand out too much from the crowd. But I still remember that quick moment in time, when I triumphed and won the day, and still wonder "What if?"

Whirlpool

by Crystal Strawn



Even As I am

by Jim Walker

"Even as I am"

Simple enough, this little phrase,
Like water dripping from the eavestrough
After soft spring rain,
Mellow as the clover at my April feet,
Crystal as the sunshine off Lake Linnet
On May mornings.
Like gentle trades easeful off Kakela
Lifting wisps across your pensive brow,
Cooling oppressive August heat.

Gentle as lambswool comforter, that voice.
I think about it now, imagining its echo
In the growing dusk as one by one
The streetlights flicker towards life
And wiry six-year-olds shout laughter
And challenge, racing home from play
To steamy casseroles and chilled ice cream
Carefree as the single gull that glides
Down purpling sky, dark against the last pink cloud
As if a sign.

Vines

by Chris Ward

Vines grow from the soft, warm nooks of my room
and like silent, sleepy breaths,
curl round my limbs.

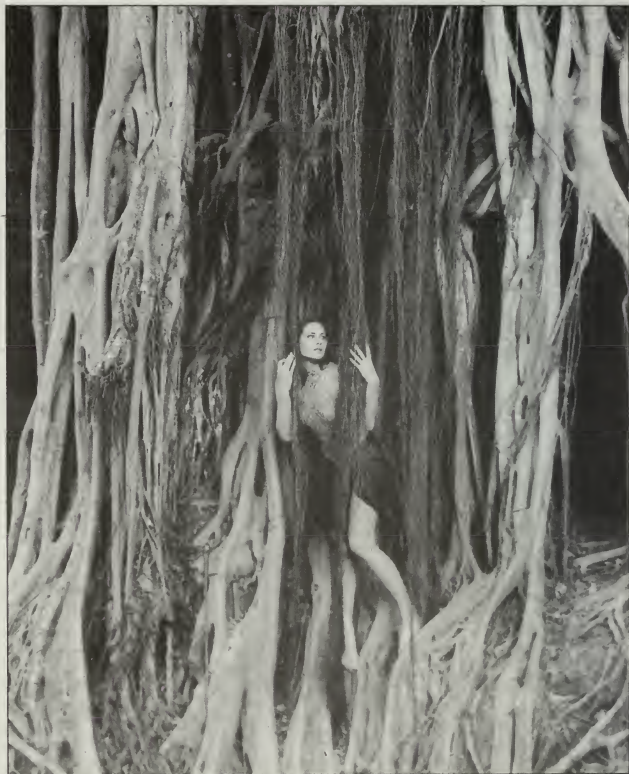
If I struggle free they retreat like a snake
and follow me out the door,
always just in sight.

Through long hours, we compete for growth:
caresses of soft shoots broken by concentration relaxed
by caresses.

How long before I am like the brown bicycle skeleton
swallowed beside the trellis?

Untitled

by Becky Hilton



Eureka

by Nathan Elmer

My family moved to Eureka, Utah when I was 8 years old. Eureka was an old goldmining town nestled in the top of some desert mountains in west Juab County. My Dad sold our camper just as summer was approaching and used the money to buy a house on Divdend, one of the few roads that was actually paved in Eureka. I was very sad about losing the camper. When my Dad took the camper off the truck I remember thinking that the truck looked so naked, almost embarrassed. I soon forgot about the camper though, as I discovered that riding in the pick-up bed was about as much fun as riding inside the camper had ever been. And in fact, it was from the bed of our pick-up that I first encountered the place in which I was to spend the next seven years of my life, the rough and dusty old community of Eureka, Utah.

Friday night my Mom and Dad put all my clothes and things into a box. Saturday, real early in the morning, my Dad and my brother loaded the truck with the television, my bunkbed, my mom's dresser, some boxes, and my Dad's desk. I climbed into the back of the truck to look things over and discovered a cubby hole under the desk into which I quickly tucked myself. I was hidden for only a few minutes before my dog jumped into the back of the truck and found me. He always did that, ever since Dad got rid of the camper. My Dad would get mad sometimes because he would not want to take George, my dog, with him every where he went. Sometimes he wouldn't let me ride in the back either. Most of the time I would have to ride up in the front. But today, because there was not enough room for me in the front, I got to ride in the back with George.

The winding road that lead to Eureka cut through mountains covered with cedar trees and sage brush, both of which I could smell as we began to ascend the back side of the summit. Main Street ran from the top of the summit, starting at the Summit Cafe, and stretched six

and a half miles to the railroad junction just south of the city cemetery. Only a few hundred yards, however, actually had buildings on either side of the road.

"Downtown" was made up of a clump of buildings: the Post Office, the City Memorial Building, the Pick and Shovel Cafe, the Elks' Lodge, Lucille's Drugs, the Silver City Saloon, the Hotel, First Security Bank, the Barber Shop, Ray's Grocery, and the Variety Store. These buildings were positioned equal distances from the Summit Cafe and the junction.

The Post Office was the first building I ever saw the inside of. My Mom worked there. She was the Post Master. The Post Office was not like the other buildings; it was made of stone and was not connected to the rest of town. It stood alone on the side of the hill and was entered only after a long flight of stairs. The floors were made of marble; everything else was wood except the brass door handles and brass mail covers. It was very beautiful. People would come to the Post Office very early in the morning and wait for my Mom to let them in. Then they would stand around and talk well into the afternoon; and if no one else happened to be there, my Mom would end up talking for hours. She knew everything about everyone, and I soon learned that my Mom was a very important person. All of us, including my Dad, came to be identified as the Post Master's something or other (son, daughter, husband).

After having been in Eureka only a short while, my mother came home one day very concerned for us kids. Julie, one of her clerks, had informed her that outsiders were often not well received and warned her against sending her children to school "unprepared." The next day my Mom talked to Joe Bernini, the Chief of Police, and asked him if there was really any cause for concern and what it was she should do. His response was that she should teach her children to fight, "mean and dirty," and gave her the name of a man who was known for such behavior. His name was Earl Grimstead, and so for the next three weeks my brother and I went to Mr. Grimstead's house every morning to learn how to defend ourselves.

My mother made the arrangements and prepared a check for us to give him each week. We arrived at 7:00 am the first morning and knocked on the front door. Nobody answered. Because the door knob was missing we decided to go around to the back. The back door was wide open, so instead of knocking, I called through the open door, "Mr. Grimstead?" I called twice but there was no answer. Just as we were about to leave we heard some banging and shuffling around inside the house. I knocked on the open door and asked, "Is anyone home?"

"What do you want!"

"Oh Never mind, I think that we might have the wrong house."

"Don't you never mind me boy! What did you come to my door for?"

"We were just looking for Earl Grimstead."

"Well, you must be the Post Master's boys." I didn't know whether to answer the question or just run.

"Yeah. I'm Nathan, and this is my brother Chris."

"Well then, let's get started." The first day turned out to be almost identical to all of the days that followed there after. Our lessons started each day with a slew of foul words and verbal threats. He then proceeded to yank on our limbs, knock us around, and pull our hair. I couldn't believe it; here we were, everyday getting the tar beat out of us so we wouldn't get picked on in school. After complaining to my Mom about how we were suffering, she questioned him about his rather unorthodox method of instruction, to which he replied "Lady, if you can't say a couple little swear words and get a little dirty, then there ain't nobody gonna take you serious." I guess she was convinced, because we continued to endure Mr. Grimstead's abuse day after day, and in fact, I think that it steadily grew worse. The only thing I think we really ever learned was how to take a good licking. I was very anxious for school to start, to say the least. Nothing I could experience at school could have been worse than Earl Grimstead.

We were not in school more than a month before school was let out for a holiday that I was completely unfamiliar with, the Deer Hunt. We didn't have to go

back to school for over a week. Everyone wore orange everywhere. Even people who didn't deer hunt wore orange. One of the postal carriers gave my Mom an orange vest that had a U.S. Postal Service emblem sewn to it. She wore it through the entire deer hunt. My brother and I got an orange hat to wear around.

When we returned to school after the deer hunt, everyone was still wearing orange. During recess I listened to a dozen stories about the hunt and looked at all the pictures that were entered into the deer hunt picture drawing competition. After school, as I was walking home, Tony Evans, the school bully, stopped me and asked, "Where do you think you're going?"

"Home," I replied.

"I didn't say you could leave yet." I started to walk away but he grabbed me by the front of my shirt. "Hey! I didn't say you could leave yet!"

"Leave me alone! You can't tell me what to do." His grip on my shirt tightened as he gave a grin to his friends who were standing nearby. Just at that moment I executed a maneuver that I had witnessed Earl perform on my brother a number of times. Tony's body slammed into the ground with a terrible thud as his shoe shot straight into the air. I ran away and hid as fast as I could because I was afraid that his friends would catch a hold of me and really fix my wagon. After hiding for a couple of hours, I began once again to make my way home. I saw Tony's shoe resting in a pool of blood and began to worry that I would get into serious trouble. When I got home, however, I wasn't even asked why I was late. I sat through dinner waiting for the topic to come up. I knew it would. It had to; my Mom hears everything. Not a word though, and I preferred it that way. The next day at school, and from there after, I never had to wait to play four-square; I always got to move up in the lunch line, and everyone always passed me the ball.

When I was ten, the Askelsons moved into the dump of a house just down the street from where I lived. David and Lauraine were the "new kids," and were treated with great hostility. David was fat and filthy. He smelled bad and always had a runny nose. His clothes were very

much worn through and way too big. His first day in class, the school nurse shaved his head because he threatened everyone with lice. Lauraine, his older sister, would have been pretty if she hadn't pulled out all her eyelashes. She had to have her head shaved too.

David would always come over to my house and ask my mom if I could play. I think my mom really felt sorry for him because she always brought him into the kitchen and gave him something to eat. I kind of got used to David coming over to the house to play and we soon became friends. He knew all the best games to play and was always fun to be around. Although I ignored David at school, I was always anxious to return home and play. David seemed to accept this relationship and appeared equally anxious to play after school.

One day as I was walking home from school with a group of my friends, I noticed David walking ahead of us. We were horsing around and making a lot of noise, which made David look back. When he saw me he smiled. Robert, one of my friends said, "What are you lookin' at? Piggy, piggy, piggy." David ignored Robert's remarks and continued walking. "Good," I thought to myself. "We only have a little ways before we'll both be home." My friends, however, quickly concocted a plan to make David cry, and of course, I was the one appointed to carry it out. I walked up to David, put my arm around him, and told him not to listen to those guys. We were friends and there wasn't anything that they could do about it. Then, all of a sudden I swung David, head first, into the ground. I'll never forget him. All he said was, "I thought we were friends." He walked away that day and I never saw him again. His family moved a few days after I had so abruptly ended our friendship. I felt bad then, and still do to this day. I had hurt David more than a black eye or a fat lip. I had hurt his feelings, and he was my best friend.

There was no middle school or junior high in Eureka. Everyone went from elementary school straight into high school. Because of this I made friends who were often two or three years older than I was. This did not make my Mom happy at all. She wanted me to keep company with kids my own age. "Those older boys are nothing but

trouble," she said. I just thought that they were a lot more fun. I began to spend time at the motor cross and the Summit Cafe. The Summit Cafe was really a bar, but because Vern, the bar owner, had arcade games in the back, we were allowed to come in and hang out. Vern would often sell the older boys beer and chewing tobacco. Chad, one of my friends, gave me a pinch of snuff while we were goofing off at the motor-cross. It tasted awful, but it sure gave me a buzz. I crashed my motorcycle on the way home because of it. From then on I always kept a can of snuff down the front of my pants. And, it wasn't long before everyone I knew was using it.

I came out of the locker room stuffing a wad in my mouth one morning when I was spotted by Miss Reese. I ducked back into the locker room to rinse my mouth out, but before I could finish she was hauling me off to the Principal's office. I told them that I had been eating sunflower seeds, and that the black specks that Miss. Reese had seen in my mouth were actually specks from the sunflower seed shells. As they were discussing what they were going to do with me, Mr. Griggs, the band teacher, walked into the room and joined the conversation. (It just so happened that Mr. Griggs was also Bishop Griggs.) Now, not only was I going to have to go to juvenile court, I was going to have to have an interview with my bishop. Bishop Griggs listened to everything they had to say and said, "Well, I guess we better take Nathan on his word." I felt so guilty that I never used tobacco again.

My family moved away from Eureka just after I got my driver's license. I've been back to visit a couple of times, but things are much different now. The population has since dwindled from 800 to less than 200; most all of the buildings have been boarded up, and students are being bussed to the Nebo School District down in Utah Valley. The only thing that has really remained the same is the Post Office.

Beautiful Hawaii

by Michael Sarafian



Across All Boundaries

by Daniel Marler

Pain sliced through Derry's head at the command of his digital alarm clock's incessant beeping. His hand fell heavily on the small white box of plastic resting on the floor. The clock shared the small bedroom with a chest of drawers and the mattress Derry slept on. After rubbing his eyes briefly with large hands, Derry got up using the wall for support.

Definitely too much to drink last night, but yesterday had been especially bad. After work Derry had made his way to the Crouching Cobra. The Cobra was a smoke filled bar close to the ballpark. He liked the low-key atmosphere there where he could kill time. Going home too early always put him on edge. Every noise he made echoed off the walls emphasizing the emptiness. Besides, he liked watching other people at the Cobra. They had interesting conversations and relationships. From his silent corner in the back he had gotten to know all the regulars and the drunken songs they sang. Sometimes he even found himself humming along. Other times he drew within himself thinking of the boys he coached at the ball field, wishing they could play ball every day. Most of the time, however, he sat and-watched and drank a beer all by himself. He was always by himself.

Derry stumbled into the bathroom flicking on lights along the way. When his eyes had adjusted to the light, he looked up into his reflection and smiled. Pineapple came to mind because of the hair that stuck straight up on his head. He took note of the dark bags forming under his bloodshot eyes. Normally he was decent looking. Dark brown hair rested, easily parted on the left side, atop a head crowning a long skinny body. He sometimes thought of himself as an unpainted fence post. Not handsome or ugly, just plain.

He had a Little League baseball team to coach in an hour and needed to eat, shower, and change. Coaching was the highlight of his day. He loved being out with kids before society could corrupt them. Many of these kids needed a way to escape the trials of city life for a while and Derry was more than willing to help. No one had ever been there for him, in or out of the orphanage.

The décor in Derry's front room consisted of a faded brown sofa and recliner chair. These faced the TV he'd bought at Goodwill for five dollars. It wasn't the best piece of technology, but it made noise and you could make out the picture if you looked at it. Coming out of the shower still dripping he turned it on and headed back into the isolation chamber, his name for the bedroom because of the small size and bare furnishings.

He changed into sweat pants and an old T-shirt. After grabbing a bat and glove, three baseballs, a change of clothes for work after and his whistle, he stuffed them into a backpack. He moved into the front room and tossed the gear onto the couch. The TV blabbed in the background as Derry entered the kitchen. The kitchen was bare like the bedroom. It contained a table and two chairs. Moving around the country made acquiring junk hard to do.

Derry's cooking skills were nonexistent so he made do with microwavable and sandwich type foods. This morning, three plain hot dogs made breakfast.

He moved into the front room so he could hear the TV better, but was distracted by the pictures he'd put up on the wall. He didn't have many, so he taped them all up wherever he went. He always looked at the first picture taken of him. In it he stood naked in a parking lot bleeding from the left shoulder. The other boys from the orphanage had beaten him, stolen his clothes and taken the picture to humiliate him whenever they needed a boost to their self-esteem. It fell into his hands eventually and he kept it as a simple reminder of how cruel and untrustworthy people could be.

A Polaroid showed Derry leaving the orphanage after graduation from the little school they had there. They gave him a hundred bucks and said, "Good luck!" No tears were shed that day, by anyone. Always hard working and levelheaded, he never had much difficulty finding a job. Derry had tried to get one picture from each of his jobs. These made up the rest of his memories. In one, he stood over a freshly poured concrete driveway.

Another showed him in a pizza delivery truck. Goodness! How he'd hated delivering pizza. Of all his few pictures, his favorite was of a van. A nice blue Dodge Caravan with him in the driver's seat and a woman named Sara on the passenger side. He'd been a used car dealer in Mississippi for about a year. And he'd been playing around on a slow day pretending he owned the car. Sara, the secretary for the dealership, came and sat next to him for the picture. It captured in that moment what he always dreamed of, but knew would never happen.

Looking down at his plate, he saw the hot dogs were gone yet he hadn't tasted one bite, only a bitterness that wouldn't go away. His chest and stomach still felt empty so he grabbed the jug of water from the fridge and drank as much as he could. He still felt empty, but headed out the door anyway.

Practice made Derry feel better, but it always ended too fast. And he stood alone in the ballpark watching fathers pick up their boys and drive away. Derry made his way to the fruit store where he worked. He barely noticed the tall buildings, the heavy traffic or the people sharing the sidewalk. The fruit store came up quickly and Derry ducked inside the room. The yellow glow of electric light bathed him upon entrance and he headed into the storage room behind the cash register. Changing into jeans he also put on a brown apron. He'd been lucky to get this job on his first day in town. Hired as a miscellaneous worker, he did whatever they needed him for, from carrying fruit to working the register. It paid the bills.

The lemon tea could not diminish the bitter taste in Mary's mouth and she placed the cup down on the companion saucer she deftly held in her left hand. A pattern of golden flowers connected by hanging ribbons danced around the edges of the cup and saucer. Alone on the terrace, Mary gazed out into the garden from under a large porch umbrella. A cool breeze wafted up from off the plains and floated through the garden swaying the soft carnations in red, yellow and white. The wind, smelling of spring, came up off the flowers and tossed the loose bangs of Mary's blond hair into her eyes. How many times had she looked upon the garden alone from her perch upon the terrace? I'm always alone, she thought as she brushed bangs in back of her ears.

Mother couldn't come for tea this day, something about a club meeting. Her other friends were busy as well. Myra was on a cruise with her husband in the Caribbean, Sorilay was visiting family in California, and Camille was preparing for a party at her home within the week. This left Mary alone with her thoughts.

She considered calling a few other acquaintances, but most of them were married and busy with small children. Many times she broke down and called on them anyway. They always brought their babies and kids, making it hard to have a decent conversation, what with the baby waking up and demanding to be held and fed. Or the kids wandered around (with their funny little walks) touching everything in sight. Many times she found herself reaching out to touch them with a simple caress or a pat on the back. Sometimes she found herself wanting to pick a child up and just hold it. To counter these feelings, she thought of dirty diapers, all-night crying sessions, and the systematic destruction of all her personal possessions. These little ones really need watching, she thought, and it takes a lot out of a person. Having children around is hardly the setting for a soothing cup of tea.

Mary set the cup and saucer down on the round glass table and stood, moving out from under the large umbrella.

la. The sun fell upon her as she moved toward the railing and heated her neck and face. It felt nice, just to stand there with the breeze and warm sunshine. The list flashed in her mind, her special list of things to do that she saved for times like this.

After mentally flipping through letter writing, going over the calendar, and reading a book, she settled on redecorating the study. After Jim had died in the accident, she'd moved his desk and books up to the attic, but hadn't been able to bring herself to change the room in any other way.

Some days the study would call to her and she would draw close to it, never entering, only standing in the doorway looking at the emptiness.

Now Mary turned toward the glass door of her home and stopped. It stood waiting to breathe her in like the opening of a black hole. Maybe not, she decided. "William!" she called, heading back to her seat under the umbrella.

The door opened behind her and a balding man in his sixties came out dressed in a fine black suit. "Done with your tea, Madam?"

"Yes. Take it away thank you. And William, can you bring me the white picture album, please?"

"Certainly," he said. He gathered up the teapot, cup, and saucer on a silver tray, then retreated into the house. She gazed off into the distance at nothing in particular. Within a minute, William returned holding a large white three-ring binder. Gold trim glittered in the sun as he handed it to Mary. "Will there be anything else, Madam?" he said.

"No. Thank you." She opened the album and flipped through the pages.

High school had been fun. She smiled remembering shopping with her friends. They had held competitions to see who could buy the most risqué clothing. At slumber parties, they'd model the clothes for each other laughing themselves into a frenzy. They also competed over who could get more dates within a week or an evening. Mary

laughed at the picture of Myra in a corner Burger joint dressed in a lavender evening gown. To win that week she'd taken a date with some grease monkey of a boy. He'd taken her to the drag races and then to this restaurant, Joe's or something, pretending the whole time he didn't see her fine dress. Mary passed over pictures of herself at piano recitals remembering how her parents had made her take lessons for years. At least until Father died.

Pictures of Father replaced her smile with a slight frown. She barely remembered him now. What had it been, she calculated, twelve years? He had been a businessman, dealing with stocks and bonds and other investments. Anyway he was successful because Mother and I don't have to worry about a thing.

The pictures of her senior prom brought the smile back. Tom Berryback, her date, had been one of the cutest guys in the school. He was also the leading running back of the high school football team. She'd had a major crush on him for at least a year and could still remember his bright smile and how his white bangs hung down into his smooth, perfectly tanned face.

She giggled remembering how mad the cheerleaders had been when they heard he asked her to go and not one of them. "It's not my fault he wants to date the prettier woman," she'd mocked them after getting a few rude remarks.

She passed a few college pictures taken in her first and only semester.

Following those came pictures of her first apartment. Even though she had decided that college was not her slice of cake, she couldn't bring herself to move back in with Mother. And shortly after that, she'd met Jim. Boy!

He was a handsome man. Staring at the first picture she'd ever taken of him, his short brown hair hung straight down dripping sweat into his eyes.

The white shirt and shorts he wore were damp and his bare legs and arms showed nicely toned muscles. The picture captured the sun glittering off the "magic

tennis racket" he held naturally in his left hand. They met at the club near the tennis courts and began dating. He worked for his father's business managing all of the sales in the state.

Memories of Jim flooded her mind. She saw the dates they went on, then his proposal on bended knee. She saw the wedding, the honeymoon, their house and their happy life. Four years of marriage rushed past before she could stop herself and then it was too late. The phone call, she could still remember it clearly. All the emotions came back in a rush as she remembered that horrible day of Jim's death. Even now she felt sick in her stomach thinking of the endless hours in the hospital. Then, the quiet doctor. Drops of water fell from Mary's eyes to the pictures below her hanging head. She slammed the picture album shut and left it on the table. She wiped her eyes, stood, and made for the door refusing to look at it. Running through the house she entered the garage and jumped into the Porsche. It came alive underneath her as she turned the key and pumped the gas. She backed out and raced away.

With the wind in her face, Mary felt much better and decided to drive the half-hour to the city. When there she drove down the busiest streets two or three times. The sidewalks were crowded with people teeming home from work. Cars filled all lanes of the road, and she rolled down the windows of her car to hear the engines running and the horns honking. The sunlight retreated over the horizon and headlights flashed on from passing cars.

Mary became aware of the growing emptiness welling in her belly and pulled over to the nearest street-parking stall. She dropped a few coins in the meter and walked off in the direction of a fruit store she had seen earlier.

The scent of banana mixed with mango overpowered her when she entered. The store was small but well stocked with fruit piled in bins that lined the walls and made an island in the center of the room. The bins closest to the door contained bananas and mangos. Kiwi, several

types of apples and oranges, strawberries, grapes, pomegranates and other fruit were evenly displayed as well. The unshaven cashier smiled as she entered, revealing a missing tooth. Three other customers lingered over fruit bins picking fruit up, looking at it then placing it back on the pile, occasionally sticking one in a bag. Mary headed for the strawberries and began picking the best ones and bagging them.

In the process of picking fruit, she noticed a tall, thin man with brown hair sweeping the floor. A brown apron hung around his neck matching his dark hair and hard features. She looked back to the fruit, but in a moment found herself staring again at the tall thin man. Something tickled her mind about him, but she couldn't place her finger on it. He looked awfully familiar. Then, shaking herself she went back to the fruit deciding she'd never seen him before. He was sweeping the floor, for goodness sake!

Within a minute, however, she found herself looking up at him again, at his face. Nothing exceptional there. He wasn't even good-looking. His face was hard and tired. He seemed caught up in his thoughts, barely aware of his surroundings. But she must know him from somewhere. He looked up suddenly as if aware for the first time she'd been looking at him. Their eyes locked and she felt in some way she knew him.

"Can I help you?" he asked.

"Do I know you from somewhere?"

"I don't know? You from around here?"

"Yes, all my life."

"Then I don't think so. I just moved here six months back. Been in Mississippi for a while, then before that I been all around. Moving mostly around the eastern states."

"Oh," she said moving to the cashier, "sorry to bother you."

"Ain't no problem at all, Ma'am." He left the sweeping undone and walked through a door behind the register

and disappeared into a back room. After thanking the cashier, Mary walked back to the Porsche.

That night Mary curled up in bed with the TV and opened a new romance novel. She read the words but didn't see one of them. The tall thin man from the fruit store was sweeping. Then he stopped and looked at her, looked at her soul and asked, "Can I help you?" over and over again. She had to know him.

Derry stood rigidly just inside the storage room. Something was very odd about her. When she looked at me I felt something. Not love, although she definitely had the looks, but a familiarity. Maybe he did know her. But Derry dismissed the idea. No one like that would ever know him.

"You can come out now, Buck!" the cashier said to the open doorway, as he slouched against the wall. He casually picked up an apple and looked it over.

Derry came out quickly and rushed to the door to see if he could see her departing. Looking down the street he saw himself with a bag of strawberries get into a Porsche and drive away.

"My name's not Buck," he said, "it's Derry. Got it?"

"Yeah, yeah. Whatever, Buck. So, do you know her or what?" The cashier took a bite of the apple and in mid chew said, "The way you both looked at each other I thought you was going to run into each other's arms or something. What a dish! You should have said, I see you every night in my dreams, baby. You know what I mean?"

Without answering Derry picked up the broom and began where he left off.

Tonight will be different, he thought. Maybe I'll ask one of the ladies to dance at the bar. And maybe, maybe I'll strike up a conversation with some of the boys' fathers next practice.



